



# Student Friendly Services: Briefing and Demonstration

---

**Background** Commissioners have expressed interest in collaborative efforts underway within the State of California's educational enterprise to improve consumer information on academic preparation and educational opportunity. A current activity underway -- known as Student Friendly Services (SFS) -- in partnership with the California Student Information Services (CSIS) initiative of the California Department of Education, is a vehicle using technology and telecommunications to inform and offer a "one-stop electronic portal" of information and accessibility to educational opportunity in California.

Because the issue of collaborative efforts and ease of access is a significant one to Commissioners and the consumers, a demonstration of the initial phase of the project will accompany this briefing to enable Commissioners to review and comment on the progress made to date.

---

## **Student Friendly Services and California Student Information Services**

Student Friendly Services (SFS) and the California School Information Services (CSIS) are initiatives currently advancing as a collaborative partnership among California's educational institutions.

The CSIS program, under the leadership of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and in cooperation with the California Department of Education (CDE), is intended to serve two major purposes: (1) It is intended to improve statewide data for decision making while reducing the workload required of Local Education Agencies (LEA's) to provide such data, and (2) it will assist in the timely exchange of transcript data between LEA's and LEA's and higher education.

CSIS is intended to build the capacity of LEA's to implement and maintain comparable and effective student information systems that will inform and promote the use of data for educational decision-making at several levels. This includes the ability to exchange, in a timely and accurate basis, student transcript data between LEA's and postsecondary education institutions. It will also enable LEA's to submit data electronically to the CDE that will reduce their data burden while resulting in more comprehensive information available to State and local decision-makers.

As part of this effort, CSIS is working with LEAs and the CDE to build a data dictionary with common data definitions, and to implement standard procedures for the electronic exchange of student information. A significant outcome of this effort will be the development of a statewide student enrollment history database that will be used to assist LEAs in editing and reporting graduation and dropout data. This database will also yield im-

portant information on the impact of student mobility trends and educational outcomes.

---

**Student Friendly  
Services**

A key complement to development of CSIS is Student Friendly Services (SFS). Under the aegis of the California Education Round Table, the two projects are working closely to ensure maximum coordination and benefit to users. The SFS “Project Team” includes:

- ♦ The California Community Colleges (<http://www.cccco.edu/>)
- ♦ The California State University (<http://www.calstate.edu>)
- ♦ The University of California (<http://www.ucop.edu>)
- ♦ The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) (<http://www.aiccu.edu>)
- ♦ California K-12 - California Department of Education (<http://www.cde.ca.gov>)

SFS will, among other things, provide an opportunity for students to apply for admission to the community colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and independent colleges and universities at the same time through a “common front door.”

Student Friendly Services will also allow colleges and universities in California to reach out to students on a statewide level to help them prepare for the collegiate experience by providing them with an interactive medium through which to explore and learn. The SFS will be student-centered in that it will provide a one-on-one “mentoring” environment giving information and data specific to the user’s inquiries and requests. The segments have selected competitively the XAP Corporation to develop and maintain the SFS system.

California’s vision for SFS is to create a single web site to promote and service all segments of higher education in the state of California, providing students, their families, college and university staff members, and high school counselors and teachers with a simpler and friendlier interactive process to accomplish the following:

**For Students:**

- ♦ *College Exploration:* Select a university within a statewide college or university system which is best matched to the student’s needs and aspirations.
- ♦ *Understand Admission Requirements:* Plan to meet admission requirements including academic curriculum and test requirements.
- ♦ *Portfolio:* Create a secure, private, database for the benefit of students.
- ♦ *Online Applications:* Apply for admissions online.

- ♦ *Financial Aid*: Determine financial aid eligibility and apply for financial aid online.
- ♦ *Career Planning*: Plan careers and obtain job placement, both during college and after graduation.
- ♦ *Direct Communications*: Establish direct e-mail communications between students and campuses.

#### **For Parents:**

- ♦ Information on admission requirements, financial aid planning, career and major selection, and cost of going to college.
- ♦ Helpful information about the application process, including school calendars, and timelines for planning, admissions, and financial aid.
- ♦ Financial aid information regarding grants and scholarships, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), student loans, and work study programs.
- ♦ Help with the college exploration process, including student-university matching assistance, comparative views of all institutions, and multi-media virtual campus tours including video, audio, animation and VTR segments.

#### **For Counselors and Teachers:**

- Accurate information on requirements and resources including student financial assistance.
- Key contacts and facts, with visibility of students' planning, provided the student authorizes release of the information.
- Materials for class exercises, including introductory material and training material to use SFS.

---

#### **Student centered**

An important aspect of the SFS vision is to establish a *student-centered* rather than a school-based system: one that has the greatest chance to reach students and attain a high rate of utilization. Students can access SFS on any computer that has an Internet connection – at home, at school, at the library, at a friend's house – at no cost to them. The SFS will provide year-by-year academic planning for students as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and continuing throughout in high school. Future services will address the academic planning, transfer and articulation needs of community college students through graduate school.

As a student-centered resource, there are several phases available for students, including:

- Exploration – Gain an overview of higher education opportunities within California

- Student Academic Portfolio – Create a secure personal academic portfolio as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade to self-report personal and academic achievement and track progress toward meeting curriculum and testing entrance requirements
- Pre-application – Retrieve information concerning individual campuses to help select the campus of choice
- Career Planning - Explore careers correlated to a particular major/program/credential
- Application – Enable students to enter common data elements only once, and have the ability, at the student’s request, for the data to populate online applications across all higher education segments within California.
- Electronic Records Transfer-- The SFS-CSIS project will ultimately enable students to authorize electronically transmission of transcripts from K-12 to higher education and from community colleges to four-year institutions. This will require only a single request from the student to initiate the transfer from multiple K-12 schools to multiple higher education campuses. It will eliminate the need for and cost of high schools to manually process multiple academic transcript requests.
- Financial Aid – To help understand the affordability of an education and the net-cost of going to college, and to receive an estimate of financial aid eligibility and award amount, automatically populate the FAFSA-on-the-Web, and experience a simpler financial aid process
- Electronic Mail – Communicate directly to departments of campuses of interest via E-mail (free E-mail accounts).

An important part of California’s vision is to have SFS interconnect to major value-added educational related, web sites, clearinghouses, and databases. One example of this is the interface to the U.S. Department of Education’s Federal Financial Aid website.

---

**Student confidentiality**

A core principle of California’s strategic plan for SFS is assurance of full privacy and confidentiality of student data. All data entered by the student will be confidential, and its use will be guided and controlled by the student.

The SFS project will work closely with CSIS to ensure that all format and confidentiality protocols are fully compatible. The underlying principle for all refinements will be increasing convenience and access to information for all students within a secure and user-friendly environment. The SFS system will be a vital asset for life-long learning in California.

---

**Initial  
milestones**

The following are the initial deliverables for the SFS system:

- Comparative campus match
- Criteria searches
- Key facts presentations
- Key word searching of site and campus web resources
- Virtual campus tours
- General admissions requirements
- General financial aid information
- Information on costs and financing and education
- Frequently asked questions
- Generic year-by-year course planning recommendations for preparation for college
- Links to significant offices on participating campuses
- Financial aid estimator
- Timeline management assistant
- Career and major planner
- Self-entered personal and academic performance information
- Admissions planner for grades 7-12
- Admissions planner for transfer students
- Transcript evaluator
- Campus controls
- Personal portfolio data transmission to and from other systems within the project
- Input from external authenticated data sources
- Data replication to and from other systems within the project
- Links to externally developed college preparatory assessments
- Material to support class exercises in K-12
- Links to transfer data to participating online applications
- Data replication to and from other identified systems
- Links to external projects, including the Federal Department of Education
- Linkage to CSIS project for transmission of student data from K-12 to higher education

*Additional deliverables and features are to be determined after full implementation of the above components of SFS.*

---